THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (CAPT. JAI NARAYAN PRASAD NISHAD) : (a) It is not correct to say that protection of old trees and rare plants have been neglected at Sibpur Botanical Garden, Howrah, West Bengal, due to mismanagement of Botanical Survey of India.

(b) There are vacancies of scientists from varying period, these are in the process of being filled up. No complaint of any internal clique working against the joining of new people is there.

(c) to (e). A communication dated 30.10.96 from the Secretary General, Confederation of Central Government Employees and Workers (CCGE&W), Delhi was received by the Secretary to the Government of India, Ministry of Environment and Forests (GOI, MOEF). The Secretary MOEF, GOI met the representatives of Botanical Survey of India Employees Association on 13.11.1996. Various issues concerning the employees of the BSI were discussed in this meeting and the representatives were informed of the steps being taken by the Ministry to resolve these issues.

The important issues on which progress of action was noted in this meeting were as follows :

(1) Implementation of Biswas Committee Report regarding relaxation of the requirement of M.Sc. qualifications for appointment by promotion as Scientist 'B', in favour of Scientists in the feeder grade who possess B.Sc. qualifications.

(2) Direct recruitment to current vacancies of posts of Scientists and upgradation of some posts of Stenographers after seeking and obtaining relaxations of the instructions which prohibit such direct recruitment/upgradation when work measurement study is in progress in the BSI. The need to complete the work measurement study urgently was also emphasised.

(3) Restructuring of the posts of Drivers, and consideration of awards of higher scales of pay to Fieldman and Dresser.

(4) Filling up of 2 posts of Administrative Officers.

[Translation]

Pearl Production in Madhya Pradesh

3652. SHRI DADA BABURAO PARANJPE : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether pearls can be derived from Leg, Lodence marginalis oysters found abundantly in the Narmada river;

(b) whether the Government propose to formulate any action plan for the production of cultured pearls in the future; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (EXCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA) : (a) The Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (CIFA) Bhubaneswar has evolved an indigenous method of culturing pearls in the common freshwater mussel, Lamellidens marginalis.

(b) and (c). The technology is still at an experimental stage.

Wage Revision Agreement

3653. SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN :
SHRI GANGA RAM KOLI :

Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state :

(a) whether the wage revision agreement of sixty thousand employees of the Food Corporation of India w.e.f. February 1, 1992 is under consideration of the Ministry;

(b) the reasons for inordinate delay in clearance of the same as a result of which employees will have to suffer economic losses; and

(c) the time by which the said agreement would be accorded clearance?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) : (a) The proposal of wage revision was received from Food Corporation of India in July, 1996. Such proposals are to be examined in the Ministries of Food, Finance and the Department of Public Enterprises.

(b) and (c). There has been no inordinate delay in clearance as such matters are complicated and require inter-ministerial consultation. Though the matter is accorded high priority at various levels, no specific date can be committed for according clearance.

[English]

Self-Employment Scheme for OBCs

3654. SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS : Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government propose to launch a new self-employment scheme for the jobless youths belonging to Other Backward Classes during the current financial year;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the criteria proposed to be fixed to provide loans and subsidy to them?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA) : (a) No, Sir. However, the measures undertaken by the NBCFDC over the year to improve the quality of planning and implementation of